

# Dorset Partnership Agreement

Local area partners -  
Partnership working document



# Introduction

This agreement seeks to provide a framework across the Dorset Council area for all key strategic partners to collaboratively work to achieve the best outcomes for Children and Young People. It is set within the context and principles laid out in the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in recognition that all Children and Young People's right to participate in decision-making is enshrined in law via Section 19 of the **Children and Families Act 2014**, the **SEND Code of Practice 2014**, the **Mental Capacity Act 2005** and the **Care Act 2015**.

## Our Vision

We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive and where families are supported to be the best that they can be.

## Our Mission

Our partnership has a bold and courageous vision:

- To deliver the best education for all our children and young people,
- To prepare our young people for independence and adulthood
- For our children and young people to experience the best possible health and wellbeing.

# Our partnership

Our partnership working will ensure that children, young people and their families have equal opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them at individual, operational and strategic levels.

Our partnership will work together to understand the needs of local children, young people and their families, so that we can commission and provide services that are inclusive and supportive, whilst keeping children and young people at the heart of all that we do.

Our partnership has been formed through the work of the Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) partners, including:

## Dorset Council



Dorset Council is ambitious for its children and young people with SEND and increased vulnerabilities to provide a great education and support strong life outcomes.

Working together with its partners and stakeholders, the Council set out a new vision, recognised in its key strategies. The Council Plan (2020–2024), sets out our vision to provide more specialist education within Dorset for children with complex communication and learning needs. In addition, the Council's Children and Young People and Families Plan (2020–2023), sets out the vision for the Council to create an education community that delivers the best outcomes for our children and young people, together.

The Council has a statutory role in the development of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans. We work collaboratively with our families, partners and educational settings, to support our children and young people with SEND to thrive and prepare for adulthood.

## NHS Dorset



NHS Dorset is committed to work in partnership with all partners and stakeholders.

NHS Dorset commissions services in partnership with our local authorities for children and young people aged 0-25 years old with SEND. We support NHS organisations and health professionals across Dorset to understand their statutory duties in relation to the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms in the Children and Families Act 2014. This includes supporting the Education, Health and Care Plan process, ensuring there is health care provision, advice and support as specified in the Education, Health and Care plan.

We commit to working in partnership with the local authorities, parent/carer groups and NHS health organisations to contribute to the local offer in Dorset and improve outcomes for children and young people.

## Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC)



Recognising the importance of parent carer involvement at a strategic level alongside health, care and education services, the Department for Education provides a grant to facilitate Parent Carer Forums in every local area.

Dorset Parent Carer Council is the established forum and the strategic partner of Dorset Council, NHS Dorset and Dorset Healthcare and members of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.

Dorset Parent Carer Council is a group of parents and carers of children with additional needs and/or disabilities. Their aim is to make sure the services in the area meet the needs of disabled children and their families.

They do this by gathering the views of local families and then working in partnership with health, care, and education to highlight where local services, processes and commissioners are working well, or challenge when changes or improvements need to be made.

Dorset Parent Carer Council will represent parent carers in Dorset at all strategic SEND and additional needs forums within the Dorset Council area - providing an insight into the lived experience of children, young people and families across area and working across the partnership to facilitate improvements. They are an equal partner in this arrangement and will provide effective support and challenge to services.

Dorset Parent Carer Council will provide the recognised communication route with parent carers, raising collective parent carer views, sharing information and collating parent carer feedback.

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Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families. [The SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#)

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# What working together means

Working closely together as partners we will deliver the best possible outcomes across our partnership for children and young people. We will do this by sharing ideas and delivering change together, whilst also challenging each other on the journey towards the mutual benefit of a strong partnership that will be evidenced through action.

As equal partners we share a mutual understanding of the complex and multi-layered challenges that each of our children, young people and their families may experience, and reflect this in the way that we work together to share the expertise that each partner brings and together unlock creative and innovative ways of undertaking these challenges as a system.

**Co-production** is a practice that we want to become part of our culture. It involves parents, carers, young people and professionals across Education, Health and Care in planning and implementing our services and the Local Offer. We will collectively celebrate our successes whilst also tackling our challenges together.

As partners we each bring different and complimentary expertise. We strive to communicate with our families together in such a way that children, young people and their families can make use of our information and ensure that their voices are heard.

Every family has a different journey and experience, and we will reflect that both in the way we listen, but also through our actions. Our partnership vision will also reach professionals representing each of our organisations and together we will strive to ensure this is embodied across our partnership.



# Our commitments

## We will:

- Work collaboratively to deliver our vision and find ways to deliver the best outcomes for our children and young people.
- Provide good quality, clear and accessible information so that Children and Young People and their families can make informed decisions and communicate their views.
- Shape workforce development and training priorities through co-production
- Share information between services to inform good practice.
- Champion the voice of young people to be involved in their own decision making.
- Ensure our Strategies and Plans are informed by our children, young people and their families.
- Provide feedback so that the benefits of participation and co-production are seen
- Communicate and celebrate our collaborative achievements.
- Deliver on our commitments to each other and to our children, young people and their families
- Create **trust** through good quality co production and inclusion using the Genuine Partnerships principles of welcome & care, value & include, communicate, work in partnership.
- Embed participation at the earliest stage of the commissioning cycle and beyond
- Recognise children, young people, and their families for their contributions to our partnership and find engaging, creative, and inclusive ways to make participation enjoyable
- Our guidance and a toolkit will support consistent and effective co-production.
- Our SEND young people's forum will enable young people to be involved in strategic decision making
- Recruitment for specialist posts working with children and young people with SEND will involve young people.

# Measuring the strength of our partnership

## We will know our partnership is working when:

- All partners understand our vision and can represent it
- The work we do supports positive outcomes for our children, young people and their families
- Children, young people and their families feel informed and heard
- We can demonstrate how we are successfully working together for every child and young person
- We are utilising our lived experience, individual expertise as partners and the commitments of our time to the partnership to make a positive difference for our children and young people in Dorset.

## How will we know if co-production is working?

### We will know that true co-production is working in Dorset when we can agree with the following statements:

- I am an equal partner and am listened to and valued.
- I am able to be a part of the process and am able to participate in all stages.
- My views and experiences are represented.
- I receive clear and timely information in a format that is accessible to me.
- I know that policies, processes, and services have been co-produced.

### Measures:

- **Evidence** - All partners who have engaged in co-production should be able to see their work within whatever is produced or undertaken. This includes detailing the contributions in service specifications, policies and procedures.
- **Evaluate** - We will gather feedback to ensure that all stakeholders feel that their voices have been heard and that they have been able to make a difference.
- **Audit** - All services and teams working with children, young people and young adults with SEND will complete an annual participation audit with a focus on improving participation.
- We will use an evidence-based approach
- We will gather feedback to demonstrate how co-production is making a difference and communicate this effectively.
- All partners who have engaged in co-production should feel that they have been able to participate and can see their contribution.

## Making decisions together

We have many mechanisms to collaborate and make decisions together through our Strategic Alliance framework

- Strategic Alliance Board
- Good and Better Board
- Dorset Education Board
- Joint Commissioning Board
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Co-production meetings
- The SEND Health Forum
- Transitions Board

## Signed by our partnership:

Dorset Council



NHS Dorset



Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC)



# Appendices

National Alliance for Partnership Working (NAPW) - [What is parent carer participation?](#) | [Contact](#)

Quality Indicators for Co-production and Inclusive Practice [quality\\_indicators\\_tool.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Co-production (Working Together) Tool Kit: [Co-production \(Working Together\) Tool Kit : North Cumbria CCG](#)

Genuine Partnerships: [www.genuinepartnerships.co.uk](http://www.genuinepartnerships.co.uk)

